

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended): A method of inspecting the interior of a tire from a transmission X-ray image of the tire obtained by applying an X-ray to ~~the~~a conveyed tire from X-ray application means, comprising the step of applying the X-ray to at least two positions ~~of the tires as a specimen~~including the opposite ends of the tire to take transmission X-ray images of the tire.

2. (original): The X-ray tire inspection method according to claim 1, wherein the outer diameter of the conveyed tire is measured and the positions of the X-ray application means are changed according to the measurement result.

3. (original): The X-ray tire inspection method according to claim 2, wherein the X-ray application means are installed a predetermined distance inward from the measurement positions of the outer diameter of the tire.

4. (original): The X-ray tire inspection method according to any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein two out of the transmission X-ray images of the tire are selected, transmission X-ray images of half portions near the X-ray application means of the tire are combined to form a transmission X-ray composite image of the whole tire, and the interior of the tire is inspected from this transmission X-ray composite image of the whole tire.

5. (original): The X-ray tire inspection method according to claim 1, comprising the steps of:

measuring the outer diameter of the conveyed tire;
installing the X-ray application means at positions 2 to 3 cm inward from the measurement positions of the outer diameter of the tire based on the measurement data on the outer diameter of the tire;
taking transmission X-ray images of the tire with the X-ray application means;
selecting two out of the transmission X-ray images of the tire to combine the transmission X-ray images of half portions near the X-ray application means of the tire so as to form a transmission X-ray composite image of the whole tire; and
inspecting the interior of the tire from the transmission X-ray composite image of the whole tire.

6. (currently amended): An X-ray tire inspection apparatus comprising means ~~effor~~ conveying tires, means ~~effor~~ applying an X-ray to the conveyed tire and X-ray sensors for taking transmission X-ray images of the tire to inspect the interior of the tire from a transmission X-ray image obtained with the X-ray sensors, wherein

the X-ray application means are installed at positions corresponding to at least two positions of the conveyed tire.

7. (original): The X-ray tire inspection apparatus according to claim 6, which further comprises image combining means for selecting two out of the transmission X-ray images of the tire to combine transmission X-ray images of half portions near the X-ray application means of the tire and judging means for judging whether the tire is acceptable or not from a transmission X-ray composite image of the whole tire formed by the image combining means.

8. (currently amended): The X-ray tire inspection apparatus according to claim 6 or 7, which further comprises means ~~effor~~ measuring the outer diameter of the conveyed tire and

means ~~effor~~ moving the X-ray application means to positions a predetermined distance inward from the measurement positions of the outer diameter of the tire.

9. (currently amended): The X-ray tire inspection apparatus according to ~~any one of claims 6 to 8~~claim 6, wherein the X-ray application means are installed at opposite positions right above the inner wall portion of the tread belt.

10. (currently amended): The X-ray tire inspection apparatus according to ~~any one of claims 6 to 9~~claim 6, wherein one of the X-ray application means and an X-ray sensor for taking a transmission X-ray image of the tire with the X-ray application means are shifted from the other X-ray application means and the other X-ray sensor by a predetermined distance in the tire conveyance ~~distance~~direction, respectively.

11. (currently amended): The X-ray tire inspection apparatus according to ~~any one of claims 6 to 10~~claim 6, wherein the X-ray sensors are X-ray line sensors and the X-ray application means are provided with a shielding plate having a slit extending in ~~the~~an internal direction of the tire from ~~the~~a center portion and parallel to ~~the~~an extending direction of the X-ray line sensor.

12. (currently amended): The X-ray tire inspection apparatus according to ~~any one of claims 6 to 11~~claim 6, wherein the X-ray application means are installed at a height where their X-ray application ranges include at least the whole tire.

13. (currently amended): The X-ray tire inspection apparatus according to ~~any one of claims 6 to 12~~claim 6, wherein ~~the~~an interval between the two X-ray application means can be changed.